

**Written Testimony of Representative Mark Pocan (WI-02)**  
**Make It in America: What's Next?**  
**PANEL 4: The Future of American Manufacturing & Skills Training**

Thank you for inviting me today, Mr. Hoyer. I grew up in Kenosha, Wisconsin, a working class town, with a very large United Auto Workers (UAW) presence at one point. I understand what good, middle class jobs look like, the impact they can have on a community, and the role these jobs play in making sure we have strong domestic demand for American goods and services. Today, I would like to touch on two items I consider to be very important moving forward as we craft an agenda to Make It in America.

The first is the role labor unions play in ensuring we have a robust middle class market for American goods and services, and the role collective bargaining plays for union and non-union workers alike.

The second is the need for our work force to have cutting edge skills training to ensure we have the most competitive workforce that's up for any challenge. In order to do this, we must have the worker training pipeline that meets the needs of employers while providing a pathway to good, middle class jobs that can support a family.

Unions are critical to creating a robust middle class and promoting social mobility. The correlation between the decline in the percentage of profits from increased productivity that workers take home with them and the decline in labor union membership makes clear the role that labor unions play in bargaining for union and non-union workers alike.

This correlation has been talked about in the past, and will be talked about more in the future, if wages continue to remain stagnant and middle class families continue to struggle. What hasn't been talked about nearly enough is the role that labor unions play in social mobility. The Center for American Progress published a paper this week that found two key figures:

Children with parents in a union end up better off than children with parents outside of a union. Using Panel Study of Income Dynamics, or PSID figures, the researchers were able to track both parents' and their children's union status, educational attainment, income, and health status. In all categories the researchers found that children with unionized parents end up with better earnings, higher educational attainment, and fewer health issues than those without.

Children living in areas with higher rates of unionization, regardless of whether their parents are unionized, end up better off. The researchers explain that some of the changes that unions fight for create a spillover effect for non-unionized families. "Unions generally advocate policies that benefit workers, such as raising minimum wages, increasing education spending, and improving public services, so that the effect of unionism may show up in higher incomes for all children from the area regardless of the union status of their parents," said the study.

What all of this means is that unions are a critical ingredient in an economy with a robust middle class that provides ample opportunity for social mobility. I saw this growing up in Kenosha, where we made Chrysler and American Motors cars, and most families could afford one of the cars they made, in addition to a comfortable single family home with access to good schools and affordable health care.

Therefore, we must make sure workers have the legal protections they need to ensure that their voices are heard and they can bargain in good faith for their fair share. In order to make it in America, we must fiercely protect workers' freedom of speech, specifically the freedom of association and their right to organize.

Which brings me to the importance of having cutting edge skills training for workers: we have to make sure that our workers receive training to fill cutting edge manufacturing jobs through traditional and non-traditional sources, including apprenticeship. Apprenticeship is a traditional training model for many industries, but is non-traditional for many others, which is why I am focusing on it today. It's critical for us to support greater development of registered apprenticeship programs across the spectrum of industries in order to prepare more highly skilled workers for in-demand industries and occupations through heightened awareness of and participation in registered apprenticeship programs. We must provide workers and job seekers with better access to employment, education, training, and support programs to help them secure good, well-paying jobs. And we must address some of the persistent challenges with expanding apprenticeships: education (lack of awareness), cost, incentives and Federal legislative shortcomings.

Last Congress, I introduced legislation that sought to achieve these objectives, and I look forward to doing so again this Congress. I also look forward to working with you, Mr. Hoyer, to ensure that we can achieve these two objectives in order to Make It in America.